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Message Text

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43
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 /089 W
---------- 002205
R 071207Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5955
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 1489

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PINS, SY, LE
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH SYRIAN EMBASSY OFFICER

1. DURING CONVERSATION EARLIER THIS WEEK WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, TUFIK SALLOUM, SECRETARY AT SYRIAN EMBASSY, HAD FOLLOWING COMMENTS RE: (A) SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEBANON CRISIS; (B) PLO ACTIVITIES IN HUNGARY; AND (C) RELATIONS BETWEEN BAATH AND SYRIAN COMMUNISTS.

2. SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEBANON CRISIS:
SALLOUM EXPLAINED THAT SYRIA HAS A VITAL INTEREST IN A PEACEFUL AND BALANCED LEBANESE SOLUTION, ONE PROTECTING RIGHTS OF CHRISTIANS AS WELL AS MOSLEMS. PARTITION IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SYRIA UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. FIRST OF ALL, IF LEBANON WERE TO BE PARTITIONED ENTIRE POLITICAL BASE FOR PALESTINIAN ARGUMENT RE FEASIBILITY OF A SECULAR STATE WOULD BE UNDERMINED. SECONDLY, ANY NEW MOSLEM MINI-STATE CREATED WOULD BE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON SYRIA AND HIGHLY EXPOSED TO ATTACK BY ISRAEL AND WOULD FORCE SYRIA TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ARMED CONFLICT AGAINST ITS WILL, AND ON THE WRONG ISSUE. PARTITION, HE SAID, WOULD CREATE AN INHERENTLY UNSTABLE SITUATION AND SYRIA
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IS SIMPLY UNABLE TO FIGHT ANOTHER WAR AT THIS TIME.
THIRD REASON WHY LEBANESE UNITY IS VITAL TO SYRIA STEMS

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FROM FACT THAT SYRIA ITSELF IS COMPOSED OF FOUR DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS. IF LEBANON BREAKS UP, KEEPIING SYRIA A UNITED COUNTRY MAY VERY WELL BECOME IMPOSSIBLE. THUS, SYRIA'S NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST IS CRITICALLY INVOLVED IN PRESENT LEBANESE CRISIS.

3. PLO ACTIVITIES IN HUNGARY:

EMBASSY OFFICER SAID HE HAD NOTED RECENTLY THAT A PLO VISITOR HERE, DESCRIBED AS DEPUTY HEAD OF THE PLO POLITICAL SECTION, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAD MET FOR THE FIRST TIME NOT ONLY WITH MEMBERS OF THE HUNGARIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE TO WHICH PLO IS "ACCREDIED", BUT ALSO WITH OFFICIALS OF HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (HSWP). SALLOUM REPLIED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME PLO CONTACT WITH PARTY HERE HAD BEEN REVEALED IN THE PRESS, BUT IN FACT IT HAS BEEN GOING ON ALL ALONG. LOCAL PLO REPRESENTATIVE DOES NOT DO ALL HIS DEALINGS WITH HUNGARIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE. HE HAS WIDE ACCESS AND MANY CONTACTS AND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK AT FACTORIES AND UNIVERSITIES, TO "EXPLAIN PLO POINT OF VIEW". SALLOUM DENIED THAT PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN BUDAPEST IS RESTRICTED IN ANY WAY BUT QUICKLY ADDED THAT PLO REPRESENTATIVE IS NOT AS WELL OFF AS HIS COUNTERPART IN ROMANIA WHO ENJOYS VIRTUAL DIPLOMATIC STATUS. SALLOUM QUICKLY AND STRONGLY DENIED THAT PLO HAD A TRAINING CAMP JUST OUTSIDE OF SZENT ENDRE AND THAT MALEV HUNGARIAN AIRLINER WHICH EXPLODED AND CRASHED INTO THE SEA OFF BEIRUT SEVERAL MONTHS AGO CARRIED MANY PLO MEMBERS RETURNING FROM HUNGARY.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND BAATH PARTIES:

SALLOUM SAID THAT IN SYRIA COMMUNIST PARTY IS A MEMBER OF THE "NATIONAL FRONT" HEADED BY THE BAATH PARTY. RECENTLY, SOME FAIRLY SERIOUS STRAINS HAD ARISEN BETWEEN BAATH AND COMMUNIST PARTIES OVER BERLIN CONFERENCE. SALLOUM SAID THAT SINCE THERE WAS A NATIONAL FRONT IN SYRIA, BAATH PARTY WANTED TO SEND A DELEGATION, INCLUDING THEMSELVES, BUT COMMUNIST PARTY INSISTED ON GOING ALONE. IT GOT TO THE POINT, SALLOUM SAID, WHERE
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THE COMMUNISTS ENDED UP GOING WITHOUT PERMISSION OF BAATH LEADERS. (THIS WAS RATHER OBSCURE POINT BUT IT MAY HAVE SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO EMBASSY DAMASCUS.)
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